



Dear Communications Director/Editor,

In the aftermath of World War II and through the late 1980s, Slovakia, now the Slovak Republic, was governed by a communist regime like those in the Soviet Union and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Under communism, the Church was greatly restricted and oppressed, unable to carry out its mission of forming disciples and engaging in ministries of mercy to help the needy and vulnerable. The end of the old communist order has freed the Church to establish ministries that show Christ's mercy to those who face hardship today.

In late 2016, the Center for Practical Assistance to Women was started at a hospital in Levice, Slovakia, to help vulnerable pregnant women with the professional and material assistance they need to support themselves and their children. Building on this foundation, the center became an independent, nonprofit organization in 2021, expanding its mission to provide material aid such as clothing, furniture, and food to new mothers as well as to families with more than one child.

In addition to this material assistance, the center offers Evenings of Mercy, which begin with Mass and feature guest speakers, Eucharistic Adoration, confession, and prayers for healing. With support from the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe, the center further expanded its merciful mission in 2024, adding a focus on the prevention of sexual abuse, as well as programs on premarital counseling, chastity, natural family planning, and the prevention of domestic violence.

This expanded mission, along with reduced financial support from the government of the Slovak Republic, have deepened the center's need for assistance. Your diocese's support for the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe is crucial for ministries of mercy like this center in the Slovak Republic and those in more than 25 other former communist countries.

We rely on your help to promote this collection. Please get the word out using your publications, website, social media channels (using the #BuildTheFuture and #1Church1Mission hashtags), and any other outlets available to you. Share this story of spiritual and corporal works of mercy in the Slovak Republic, or use the additional resources available online, including the social media tool kit, found at www.usccb.org/cee. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-541-3365 or ncpromo@usccb.org.

Gratefully in Christ,

Margaret Hren
Assistant Director, Promotions



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